

2023 -- H 5278

LC000613

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Introduced By: Representatives McNamara, Fenton-Fung, Shallcross Smith, Biah, Donovan, and Noret

Date Introduced: February 01, 2023

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-21-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-21 entitled "Health and
2 Safety of Pupils" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 ~~16-21-4. Fire, evacuation and lockdown drills required — Failure to comply~~ **Fire and**
4 **lockdown drills required — Failure to comply.**

5 (a) It shall be the duty of the principal or other person in charge of every public school or
6 private school, college, university, or postsecondary institutions or educational institution within
7 the state, having more than twenty-five (25) pupils, to instruct and train the pupils by means of
8 drills, so that they may in a sudden emergency be able to leave school buildings and dormitories in
9 the shortest possible time and without confusion or panic.

10 Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, in all schools or buildings used for
11 educational purposes through the twelfth grade by six (6) or more persons for four (4) or more
12 hours per day or more than twelve (12) hours per week, there shall be not less than one emergency
13 egress drill conducted every month the facility is in session with all occupants of the building
14 participating in said drill. One additional emergency egress drill shall be conducted in buildings
15 that are not open on a year-round basis within the first (1st) thirty (30) days of operation. At least
16 one out of every four (4) emergency egress drills or rapid dismissals shall be obstructed by means
17 of which at least one or more exits and stairways in the school building are blocked off or not used.

18 In addition, there shall be ~~two (2) evacuation drills and two (2)~~ **four (4)** lockdown drills. ~~Evacuation~~
19 ~~drills shall be designed and conducted for use when conditions outside the school building are safer~~

1 ~~than conditions inside the building.~~ Lockdown drills shall be designed and conducted for use to
2 protect school building occupants from potential dangers in the building, and one shall be held in
3 September and one in January, and in conjunction with the local police whenever possible.

4 (b)(1) In colleges, universities, postsecondary institutions, and residence facilities in public
5 schools or private schools there shall be at least four (4) drills or rapid dismissals during the
6 academic year for each school building or residence facility, at least two (2) of which shall be held
7 between the months of September through December. The remaining two (2) drills shall be held
8 between the months of January through June. Any college, university, or postsecondary institution
9 that holds a summer session shall hold a drill or rapid dismissal during the first full week of the
10 summer session.

11 (2) At least one drill or rapid dismissal shall be obstructed so that at least one or more exits
12 or stairways in the school building or dormitory are blocked off or not used.

13 (c) For purposes of this section “residence facility” means dormitory, fraternity, sorority,
14 or any other type of residence hall, whether on campus or off campus, owned or leased by a college,
15 university, postsecondary institutions, public schools, or private school with accommodations for
16 twenty (20) or more students.

17 (d) Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, fire drills shall be required in colleges
18 or universities only for buildings which are used for a residence facility.

19 (e) Neglect by any principal or any person in charge of any public or private school or
20 educational institution to comply with the provisions of this section shall be a misdemeanor
21 punishable by a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500).

22 (f) Written reports, on forms supplied by the department of elementary and secondary
23 education, of each fire drill shall be completed immediately upon termination of every drill and
24 shall be available for review by the fire marshal, assistant deputy fire marshal, or local fire
25 authority. The fire marshal, assistant deputy fire marshal, or local fire authority may require that a
26 fire drill be conducted in his or her presence.

27 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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- 1 This act would increase the number of lockdown drills required to be done in every school
- 2 from two (2) per school year to four (4) per school year. This act would also eliminate the
- 3 requirement for two (2) yearly evacuation drills.
- 4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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